Navy Recruiting and the Privacy Act

The American Right to Privacy

Privacy is a cherished American value, closely linked to our concepts of personal freedom and well-being. At the same time, fundamental principles such as those underlying the First Amendment, perhaps the most important hallmark of American democracy, protect the free flow of information in our society.

The United States has adopted a comprehensive approach to limiting the Government's collection, use, and disclosure of personal information by creating the

What We Tell Applicants

Scenario 1: An applicant walks through the door of your NRS and is interested in joining the Navy. You are about to begin the blue-print process to make sure he is qualified. You can sense that he’s a bit apprehensive about revealing his personal information so to put him at ease, you inform him about the Privacy Act of 1974. You tell him….

Privacy Act – The Abbreviated Version

"Anything you tell me stays between you, me, and the United States Navy"

What Does the Privacy Act of 1974 Really Say?

No agency shall disclose any record which is contained in a system of records by any means of communication to any person, or to another agency, except pursuant to a written request by, or with the prior written consent of, the individual to whom the record pertains....

How the Privacy Act Relates to the Collection of Applicant Data

- You represent an agency, in this case the Department of the Navy.
- Your Rtools database represents a system of records.
- According to the Privacy Act, you cannot disclose any applicant's information contained in Rtools without the expressed written permission from the respective applicant.

Was the Law Broken?

Scenario 2: You are conducting phone power and have Rtools open. A DEPper is in your office on Phone Watch. You get up to use the restroom and leave your computer unlocked, and Rtools open. The DEPper is bored and decides to check his email on your computer. The name of an old girlfriend catches his eye in your Rtools, and he begins probing her record. He sees that she's had an abortion, and has used some serious illegal drugs, and other private information.

- **Have anyone's rights been violated?**
- **Have any laws been broken?**

Ensure Their Right to Privacy

The information on your computer is easily accessible if you don’t take the time to make sure it remains secure. Applicants have entrusted you with their personal information, and it is up to you to live up to the Navy’s end of the bargain and maintain their lawful right to privacy.

Ensuring Your Computer is Privacy Act Compliant

In a continuing effort to maintain high standards of entrusted information, and to be Privacy Act compliant, CNRC implemented the following courses of action:

- E-kits were deleted from every Recruiter computer and are no longer authorized on Recruiter laptops (With SSNs on them).
- EPSQs can ONLY be prepared on the RINCs computer or at the MEPS. No exceptions currently exist for that requirement.
- RINC computers being used as the share drive CAN NOT leave the office, and as with all laptop computers, must be secured every night.
- All RINCs should already have or are in the process of obtaining safes

Other Privacy Act Information in Your Office

Aside from the information in your computer, your office contains a myriad of personal information which is covered by the Privacy Act.

- School Transcripts
- Medical Documents
- Police Records
- Birth Certificates
- Hard copies of EPSQs
- Applicant Kits

Can you think of anything else?

Be Proactive

Making sure that you are Privacy Act compliant is about being proactive:

- Limit access to your computer. Only authorized personnel should ever have access to your computer's information.
- Lock your computer (electronically, or physically) when not in use.
- Keep your computer patched, and your antivirus program running and updated to prevent attack.
- Keep applicant records in a secure place.

Conclusion

The safeguarding of Privacy Information and your computer information systems is the responsibility of all hands. Complacency can not be a part of our office environments. Please consider who will be seeing service records, Rtools kits, Birth Certificates, etc. Safeguard the documents just as if they were your own. Remember that you must safeguard the information on your computer as well as the information in your office.

BE PROACTIVE!